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RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0199  
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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2360  
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0034  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0475  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0056  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0672  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0096  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3261  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0133  
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SUBJECT: KHMER ROUGE TRIBUNAL: RESULTS OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION  
SURVEY

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: A September 2008 survey of 1,000 adult Cambodians indicates that there is a general lack of knowledge about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT) among the Cambodian population, with 39 percent of surveyed respondents stating they had no knowledge of the KRT, and 46 percent stating they had limited knowledge. Among respondents who had at least some knowledge of the court, 30 percent stated that they want the court to speed up the trials. Two-thirds of these same knowledgeable respondents said they believed the court was neutral; however, 23 percent stated they believed the court was corrupt. Overall, respondents who had lived under the Khmer Rouge regime were more likely to have knowledge of the court. The survey was conducted by the University of California, Berkeley Human Rights Center's Initiative for Vulnerable Populations with funding from the Open Society Institute, Open Society Justice Initiative, and the German Development Service. END SUMMARY.

Lack of Knowledge About the KRT  
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12. (U) The Human Rights Center of the University of California, Berkeley released January 21 the findings of a September 2008 survey showing that 39 percent of survey respondents had no knowledge of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT), or Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) as it is officially known. Forty-six percent of respondents said they had limited knowledge of the court. Respondents who did not live under the Khmer Rouge regime were more likely to report that they had no knowledge of the ECCC -- 50 percent of those who did not live under the Khmer Rouge reported no knowledge, compared to 34 percent of those who did live under the regime. More than two-thirds of respondents (69 percent) reported that they had lived under the Khmer Rouge regime. Of respondents who had heard about the ECCC during the past month before the survey, main sources of information regarding the ECCC were: radio (80 percent), television (44 percent), family or friends (15 percent), and newspapers (11 percent). Three percent of respondents heard about the ECCC from posters or booklets, three percent from NGOs, and two percent from commune councilors.

## Perception That KRT Is Moving Slowly

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13. (U) Respondents who had at least some knowledge of the court (61 percent of those surveyed) were given the opportunity to make one recommendation regarding the ECCC. The recommendation of almost one third of respondents was that the ECCC speed up the trials -- approximately 34 percent of respondents who lived under the Khmer Rouge and 22 percent of respondents who did not live under the Khmer Rouge responded with this recommendation. Approximately 22 percent of all respondents recommended that the trial be fair and independent. Other recommendations elicited lower response rates: about 11 percent recommended the ECCC punish those who committed atrocities during the regime; about eight percent recommended the court find justice; nearly four percent recommended the court establish the truth; and, less than two percent recommended the court forgive the regime's top leaders. Approximately 24 percent either did not have recommendations, provided other recommendations, or responded that they "don't know."

## Survivors Better Understand the ECCC

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14. (U) According to the survey, respondents who lived under the Khmer Rouge were more likely to provide correct responses to detailed questions about the ECCC than respondents who did not live under the Khmer Rouge regime. One question was whether the ECCC was an international, national, or mixed system court with Cambodians and international judges and

PHNOM PENH 00000058 002 OF 003

staff -- 55 percent of respondents who lived under the Khmer Rouge provided the correct answer (mixed system) compared to 49 percent of those who did not live under the regime. Other questions were regarding the number and names of those awaiting trials.

15. (SBU) The published survey report speculates that knowledge about the ECCC might be higher among Khmer Rouge survivors because survivors might be more interested in the court. Poloff tapped respected court observers for their opinions. Youk Chhang, Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), added that the matter of the court is personal to Khmer Rouge victims. Cambodia Defenders Project Director Sok Sam Oeun speculated that Khmer Rouge survivors know more about the court for similar reasons, stating that those who lived under the regime suffered and remember the suffering they experienced under the regime. They therefore pay more attention to relevant information than those who did not live under the regime. Youk Chhang also commented that he felt the difference in knowledge level had something to do with the fact that those who lived under the Khmer Rouge regime are older than Cambodians who did not live under the regime. He stated that, "Young people don't know about history because they are simply young" and are generally more interested in shopping and movies. However, he did add his belief that Cambodian young people know more about genocide history than in other places in the world because they live with it through their parents every day.

## Survey Sample

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16. (U) According to the survey publication, the study's 1,000 respondents were randomly selected from the RGC Ministry of Planning's National Institute of Statistics Cambodia General Population Census village database. All respondents were 18 years of age or older. Researchers randomly selected 125 out of 1,621 communes using random sampling proportionate to population size, and included at least one commune from each province. Next, two villages were randomly selected from each commune; then, within each village four households were randomly selected, and then one member from each household. Fifty percent of respondents

were female; average age was 39.8, and 56.9 percent of the respondents were age 36 or older. Questions about ethnicity and religion show that 94.5 percent of respondents were Khmer, 2.1 percent were Cham, 1.0 percent were Vietnamese, 0.4 percent were Chinese, and 2.0 percent were other; 94.5 percent were Buddhist, 2.1 percent were Muslim, 1.0 percent Catholic, and 0.4 percent other religions consistent with demographic trends in Cambodia.

#### Outreach Programs

17. (SBU) The ECCC public affairs office has developed booklets, posters, stickers, a website, and a newsletter to assist in its outreach and media relations. Two Cambodian NGOs are known for their outreach work regarding the KRT. The DC-Cam Living Documents project brings Cambodians from all over the country to the ECCC and other relevant sites in Phnom Penh to educate the public about the Khmer Rouge era and the court. The project is currently partly funded by DRL (USD 110,000 from April 2008 to June 2009), and also receives funding from the Government of Norway. Other DC-Cam outreach and education activities are funded by the Open Society Institute, and the Governments of New Zealand, Germany, Belgium, and Denmark while the organization also receives endowment-based funding from USAID for its operations. The Center for Social Development (CSD) has conducted a series of public forums on the court. Many of the public forums have been filmed by Mekong Films, which produced a series of films about the court which have aired on Cambodian national television. The CSD project was funded by the German

PHNOM PENH 00000058 003 OF 003

Development Service and Diakonia from Sweden. The Mekong Films project was in coordination with the East-West Center, the University of California, Berkeley, and the ECCC, and received funding from the UK. The survey publication also notes that the Cambodian NGO ADHOC provides information on the KRT at the district level to officials and ordinary civilians. Also, the Khmer Institute of Democracy has a program to train citizen advisors who inform community members about the court.

#### Comment

18. (SBU) While future funding for NGOs to conduct ECCC outreach activities such as public forums and tours of the ECCC may be well spent, the University of California, Berkeley survey indicates that standard media outlets such as radio, television and newspapers have so far provided more Cambodians with knowledge of the ECCC. What media cannot provide for Cambodians is a sense of participation or greater buy-in of the process through opportunities to ask questions and discuss personal accounts. This level of buy-in among more Cambodian citizens could help the court overcome negative perceptions. We were reminded by one court observer that successful public outreach to date has been able to address the court's factual presentation of the case ("who did what") but has not fully addressed the truth and reconciliation aspects of the Khmer Rouge era ("why did they do it and how can victims come to grips with their past?"). Despite ongoing allegations of kickbacks paid by Cambodian court staff, a small set (three percent) of all respondents thought the ECCC was corrupt, compared to nearly 26 percent who judged that "normal" Cambodian courts were untrustworthy. Post will provide a copy of the survey to the Desk.

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